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EFFECT OF WRITING FREQUENCY UPON PROFICIENCY IN A COLLEGE FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE.

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THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO TEST THE HYPOTHESIS THAT WRITING PROFICIENCY IMPROVES AS WRITING FREQUENCY INCREASES. THE SECONDARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO ESTABLISH A CORRELATION BETWEEN GRAMMATICAL AND MECHANICAL ACCURACY AND THE ABILITY TO WRITE WELL. TO THIS END, 6 EXPERIMENTAL COLLEGE FRESHMAN SECTIONS WERE ESTABLISHED, EACH 2 SECTIONS WRITING 20, 8, AND 4 THEMES RESPECTIVELY. ESSAYS FROM DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS WERE GRADED AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR UPON--(1) CONTENT, (2) ORGANIZATIONS, (3) DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS, (4) STYLE, AND (5) MECHANICS. WHILE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEST ESSAYS DID NOT SUPPORT THE HYPOTHESIS, BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TAKING PART IN THE STUDY FELT THERE WAS IMPROVEMENT. ANALYSIS ON THE BASIS OF OBJECTIVE TESTS DID SHOW, HOWEVER, A SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION BETWEEN MECHANICAL ACCURACY AND THE ABILITY TO WRITE WELL. FURTHER RESEARCH WAS CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR DEFINITE RESULTS WHICH COULD BE USED IN IMPLEMENTING REFORM OF THE TRADITIONAL COLLEGE COURSE. (PM)

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Cooperative Research Project No. 2846
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by

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H. Leland Varley
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I. Problem. Background and Perspective.

There seems to be general agreement among educators that college students do not write as lucidly, coherently, and fluently as they should. The traditional freshman English course has as its end the improvement of student writing, and it rests on the premise that writing skills, like other skills, can be improved with practice. Because the provision of such practice in a formal composition course during the freshman year has become increasingly difficult, in a period of rapidly rising enrollments and an acute shortage of qualified teachers, the traditional freshman course is under scrutiny.

One group of educators would solve the freshman English problem by decree. George Herman, in his article "College Decomposition and Illiterature,"[1] writes: "We college English teachers can help reverse our country's progress toward general incompetence in reading and writing by refusing to lift a finger." Let us not admit freshmen, Professor Herman counsels, who have not already learned "the basic skills for preserving and creating a literate society." Such action would place the burden of improving student writing on the secondary schools, which is just where it belongs, according to Thomas C. Pollock, William C. DeVane, and Robert G. Spiller.[2] Professor Warner Rice, Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Michigan, agrees, and has realistically included in his proposal an outline of the obligations which college English departments would either retain or acquire upon the abolition of the traditional freshman course.[3]

To date, however, colleges have been understandably hesitant to close their doors to students who may write badly but who are in other respects capable and well-prepared. Moreover, our high schools are far from shirking their responsibilities. The fight for reduced teaching loads for English teachers, the employment of lay readers in many communities, the experiments with "writers workshops" and individual student conferences -- all testify to the willingness of our secondary schools to help their students cultivate, through practice, writing skills.

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[1] The Journal of Higher Education, XXIX (December, 1958), 471-77, 517.

[2] "The English Language in American Education," reprinted in PMLA, LXVI (February, 1951), 39-79.

[3] "A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English, As It Is Now Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum," College English, XXI (April, 1960), 361-67.

On the college level, even among those educators who would rather refuse admission to poor writers, it is generally recognized that "institutions of higher learning must educate the students they do accept, and many freshmen ... need special help if they are to speak and write English effectively."[4] The freshman English course continues to rear its troubled head. In facing the problems raised by expanding enrollment, many English departments have given over the teaching of freshman sections to graduate students, some have instituted "master teacher" programs,[5] and still others have enlisted the cooperation of their colleagues in other departments.[6] Professor Albert Kitzhaber's Themes, Theories, and Therapy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) documents the argument that good student writing must be every faculty member's business. Few educators, however, have had the temerity to question the premise on which the traditional course and many proposed reforms rest: the premise that practice improves writing proficiency. Results of at least five studies suggest it may not be true -- but even if it is true, we need to know more than we do about the effect of practice on writing skill. We will be in a better position to reform the traditional freshman English course when we have more data on how much of what kind of practice is how helpful, and when.

II. Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to test the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman English course. The following supplementary questions were also posed:

> If the hypothesis is supported by the data, what is the nature of the improvement curve? Does writing proficiency vary directly with writing frequency? Or does improvement level off after four themes are written? After eight? After twenty? Does it reach a plateau and then rise again? Or does it reach a peak, after which writing proficiency suffers from additional practice?

A secondary objective of the study was to test the hypothesis that there is a high correlation between a student's knowledge of English grammar and mechanics, as demonstrated in an objective test, and his ability to write well, as demonstrated in his expository prose.

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[4]Pollock, DeVane, and Spiller, p. 74.

[5]At the University of Pittsburgh, for example, professors lecture to groups of 300 or more freshmen; students also meet in smaller classes, conducted by graduate assistants, twice each week.

[6]See, for one example, Strang Lawson, "The Colgate Plan for Improving Student Writing," Association of American Colleges Bulletin, XXXIX (1953), 288-90.

III. Related Research

A. Studies Supporting the Efficacy of Practice in Writing

1. Lokke and Wykoff

At Purdue University, during the second semester of the academic year 1947-1948, two freshman classes with a total of twenty students wrote thirty-two to thirty-four themes -- double the usual number.[7] Control groups I and II were students in the classes of seven different instructors, "paired off" with students in the experimental group. Each student's themes were graded by his own instructor. Using the theme and semester grades assigned by the various instructors as data (a questionable procedure), the experimenters concluded, in part:

1) By doubling writing assignments, student failures can be reduced 66⅔; student improvement, judged by the final semester grade, can be increased 60%.

2) Forty percent of the students reached the limit of their achievement after writing twelve to fifteen themes.

3) "The experimental group, with less formal or classroom instruction in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics, compared favorably in tests with the groups... having more such formal instruction." (p. 438)

The report of the study pointed to the small numbers of students involved, and urged teachers of English composition to "conduct similar experiments until the accumulated data are dependable." (p. 439)

2. Maize

Yet another study at Purdue, according to an article in the NEA Journal of September, 1953, supported the hypothesis "that the only way to learn to write is to write."[8] Students in an experimental group wrote "the equivalent of a theme a day for a total of forty-two themes." Students in a control group wrote a theme a week

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[7]Virgil L. Lokke and George S. Wykoff, " 'Double Writing' in Freshman Composition -- an Experiment," School and Society, LXVIII (December 18, 1948), 437-39.

[8]Ray C. Maize, "A Theme a Day," pp. 335-36.

for a total of fourteen themes. The reported conclusion was that "the experimental class showed overwhelming evidence of superiority over the control groups in language use by the end of the semester." However, if the study referred to here is the one reported in the same author's "A Study of Two Methods of Teaching English Composition to Retarded College Freshmen" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1952), it should be noted that the superiority of the experimental group may well have resulted from factors other than frequency of writing.[9]

3. Buxton

During the academic year 1956-1957, an experiment was conducted at the University of Alberta to determine the effects of regular practice and of revision on the writing skills of 257 freshmen enrolled in the university's "Junior Elementary Program," a training program for prospective teachers.[10] The student subjects were divided into three groups: "Control," "Writing," and "Revision." Students in the Writing and Revision groups wrote sixteen essays over and above the regular assignments covered by all the groups. Students in the Writing group were given considerable freedom in choice of topic and mode of discourse, and their papers were returned bearing only brief terminal comments. Students in the Revision group were held to assigned choices of topic and modes of discourse, and their papers were returned bearing marginal and terminal comments and two grades: one for "content and organization," the other for "general correctness and accuracy." Only the papers submitted by students in the Revision group were discussed in class and revised by the writers.

The pre- and post-testing of subjects in this study utilized both objective and essay tests. The scores in the objective tests disclosed no significant differences in gain among the three groups, but the essay test grades indicated that "the Revision group gained significantly over the Writing group in three categories and over the Control group in six of the fifteen categories," or items, evaluated by the essay-test readers.

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[9]See Research in Written Composition by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1963), p. 34.

[10]Earl W. Buxton, "An Experiment to Test the Effects of Writing Frequency and Guided Practice upon Students' Skill in Written Expression" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1958). University Microfilm No. 58-3596. Summarized by Richard Braddock, et al., pp. 58-70, from which summary the quotations, below, were taken.

B. Studies Not Supporting the Efficacy of Practice in Writing

1. Dressel, Schmid, and Kincaid

Investigators at Michigan State College reported, in December, 1952, that they had compared the writing of those "who had the most and those who had the least essay-type writing experience as freshmen."[11] Group A had written an average of 131 hours during the year, group B had written an average of 4--beyond the writing done for the freshman writing course. Each student in the study population (198 students) wrote two themes to provide data, one at the beginning of the year, and one at the end. The conclusion reached was that "the average final theme grade for the group with the most writing experience did not differ significantly from the average grade earned by those who were required to do little writing in their basic courses.... Thus the hypothesis that mere practice in writing without attention to writing quality will improve writing skills was not supported in this study." (p. 289)

2. Sutton and Allen

In 1962, 117 freshmen at Stetson University participated in a study of "The Effect of Practice and Evaluation on Improvement in Written Composition" (U.S. Office of Education Cooperative Research Project No. 1993).[12] The objective of this study was to test the following hypotheses (pp. 2-3):

1) "That writing practice followed by evaluation is significantly more effective in improving the writing ability of college students than no writing practice (and consequently no evaluation)."

2) That "evaluation by peers is as effective as evaluation by teachers in influencing improvement of student compositions."

3) "That direct practice in the evaluation of papers written by peers will result in significantly greater improvement in composition than will practice in writing for evaluation by others."

The results of this study, based on both objective and essay test scores earned by the participants, failed to support any of the hypotheses. Moreover, the investigators

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[11]Paul Dressel, John Schmid, and Gerald Kincaid, "The Effect of Writing Frequency upon Essay-Type Writing Proficiency at the College Level," Journal of Education Research, XLVI (December, 1952), 285-93.

[12]Final Report by Joseph T. Sutton and Eliot D. Allen, 1964.

found that, according to their analysis of writing sample evaluations, there was "a decline in writing performance ... in every section." (p.26) (The objective test scores did indicate improvements in cell means, but, again, failed to support the study's hypotheses.)

3. Christiansen

At the Metropolitan Junior College, in Kansas City, an experimental study conducted by Mark A. Christiansen during the Fall Semester, 1963-1964, divided 148 randomly selected students into two groups.[13]

> "An experimental group wrote three times as many compositions as did a control group, or, more specifically, 24 themes compared to 8 themes; furthermore, students in the experimental group did not read prose selections from a regular freshman reader as did students in the control group.... In all other respects, students in the two groups underwent the same instruction." (p. 122)

The following conclusions,among others, were drawn from this study, which used both essay and objective type tests to provide data for analysis:

1) Both the experimental and the control groups showed significant improvement in composition writing, but the improvement shown by the experimental group was not significantly greater than the improvement shown by the control group, which wrote one-third as many themes.

2) The experimental sections, which did not read and analyze essays in a textbook during the semester, "showed as much improvement in reading ability as did the control sections," which did use a regular freshman reader.

3) "Both groups showed an improvement in understanding problems involving style and rhetoric, but there was no statistically significant difference in gains made between the two groups."

4) "There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the final semester marks recorded for this first semester course in college Freshman English."

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[13] "Tripling Writing and Omitting Readings in Freshman English: An Experiment," College Composition and Communication, XVI (May, 1965), 122-24.

4. Heys

On the high school level, the chairman of the English department at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School in Sudbury, Massachusetts, has conducted an experiment which led to the following, among other conclusions:

1) "The claim that 'the way to learn to write is to write' is not substantiated by this experiment."

2) "The claim that ability to write well is related to the amount of writing done is not substantiated by this experiment." [14]

The experimenters did find that "frequent writing practice probably yields greater dividends in grade 12 than in grades 9, 10, and 11," but they felt that "much more experimentation remains to be done."

5. Burton and Arnold

Another study on the high school level, one which involved eight tenth-grade classes in two high schools in Pinellas County, Florida, revealed "no differences in group performance resulting from either frequent practice or intensive evaluation." [15] A report of this study, [16] which was supported by the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Cooperative Research Project No. 1523), indicates that the "low frequency of writing" groups wrote three themes each semester, whilethe "high frequency of writing" groups wrote at least one 250 word theme each week, and two classes wrote some form of composition at least four times each week.

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[14] Frank Heys, Jr., "The Theme-a-Week Assumption: A Report of an Experiment," The English Journal, LI (May, 1962), 320-22.

[15] Lois V. Arnold, "Writer's Cramp and Eyestrain--Are They Paying Off?" in The English Journal, XXV (January, 1964), 10-15.

[16] By Dwight L. Burton and Lois V. Arnold (Florida State University, 1963).

IV. Procedure

A. Regular English Sections

During the academic year 1964-1965 at the University of Massachusetts, 6 sections of the regular freshman English course (English 1-2) were designated to participate in the study. Freshman students were randomly assigned to these sections by the university's "computer scheduling" program: a subsequent analysis of variance disclosed no significant differences between sections in the students' CEEB Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal scores, nor were there any appreciable differences from section to section in the mean scores achieved in two objective English tests (Educational Testing Service's Cooperative English Tests, Form 1C, "Reading Comprehension" and "English Expression") administered before the first meeting of the course. The typical student in these sections had earned an SAT-Verbal score of approximately 550, and had ranked between the 85th and 89th percentiles in his high school graduating class. All the students in these 6 sections who completed the two-semester course, 118 students in all, were considered subjects for this portion of the study.

Two of the 6 sections were designated "Experimental-High Frequency" sections, and students in these sections wrote 20 expository or argumentative themes during the first semester plus 19 such themes during the second semester, for a total of 39 practice themes. Students in two of the sections ("Experimental-Low Frequency") wrote 4 practice themes each semester, or 8 during the year. Students in two "Control" sections wrote 8 themes during the first semester and 7 during the second, for a total of 15 practice themes (the usual number for this course). All practice themes were graded and commented upon by the course instructors or their assistants; students then revised their themes, and re-submitted them. Themes ranged in length from one paragraph to 2,000 words (the second semester source paper), but most were 500-700 words in length.

Each of two instructors taught one high frequency, one low frequency, and one control section; these constituted his entire teaching load for the year. Each instructor was assisted by his own reader--a graduate assistant with no other assigned duties.

The experimental design for the regular English 1-2 sections, then, took the form shown in Table 1. This design permitted the investigators to measure the respective effects of two variables ("writing frequency" and "instructor") upon student writing proficiency. Insofar as it was possible to do so, other variables and outside influences were standardized for all six sections. All were taught the same course syllabus (an outline of the topics covered is included, below, as Appendix A). Each instructor met all of his sections in a single classroom, adjoining an identical classroom used by the other instructor. No section convened earlier than 9:05 a.m. or later than 2:30 p.m., and no section met during the class hour immediately following lunch.

TABLE 1

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN FOR
ENGLISH 1-2 (REGULAR) SECTIONS

	Experimental-Low Frequency (8 themes)	Control (15 themes)	Experimental-High Frequency (39 themes)
Instructor A with Graduate Asst. A	Cell 1	Cell 2	Cell 3
Instructor B with Graduate Asst. B	Cell 4	Cell 5	Cell 6

B. Remedial English Sections

In addition to the six regular English 1-2 sections described above, four English 1-Remedial sections participated in the study during the first semester, 1964-1965. Freshman students identified (by the means described in Appendix B, below) as needing remedial work in English were randomly assigned to these sections; a subsequent analysis of variance disclosed no significant differences between sections in the students' SAT-Verbal scores, nor were there any appreciable differences between sections in the mean scores achieved in the objective English tests administered before the first meeting of the course. The typical student in these sections had earned an SAT-Verbal score of approximately 480, and had ranked between the 75th and 79th percentiles in his high school graduating class. All the students in these four sections who completed the one-semester course, 64 students in all, were considered subjects for this portion of the study.

Each of two instructors, with the help of a reader (a graduate assistant) and two undergraduate tutors, taught one "Experimental-High Frequency" section (20 themes) and one "Control" section (8 themes).

The experimental design for the English 1-Remedial sections, then, took the following form:

TABLE 2

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN FOR
ENGLISH 1-REMEDIAL SECTIONS

	Control (8 themes)	Experimental-High Frequency (20 themes)
Instructor C with assistants	Cell 7	Cell 8
Instructor D with assistants	Cell 9	Cell 10

Here, too, attemps were made to standardize all other variables and outside influences for all participating sections, but it was necessary to schedule class meetings in three,rather than two, identical classrooms. The syllabus followed was the same as that followed in the regular English 1 sections, modified only by the additions indicated in Appendix B.

C. Testing

1. Objective Tests Used in Connection with the Secondary Objective of the Study

Objective tests were used only in connection with the secondary objective of this study: to test the hypothesis that there is a high correlation between a student's knowledge of English grammar and mechanics, as demonstrated in an objective test, and his ability to write well, as demonstrated in his expository prose.

As part of the university's regular summer orientation program, during the summer preceding the start of the study, two objective English tests (the Educational Testing Service's Cooperative English Tests, Form 1C, "Reading Comprehension" and "English Expression") were administered to incoming freshmen, including those who subsequently became subjects in the writing frequency study. The "English Expression" test was again administered to returning subjects at the end of the summer following their participation in the experiment.

2. Test Essays

In meeting the primary objective of the study (the testing of the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman

English course), the investigators depended upon data derived from evaluations of test essays. The tests themselves are reproduced, below, as Appendix C.

All six of these tests were administered to all of the subjects in the regular English 1-2 sections; tests 1 through 4 were administered to all of the subjects in the English 1-Remedial sections as well. Tests 1 and 2 served as pre-tests, and were administered during the second week of the first semester in the school year 1964-1965. Tests 3 and 4 served as midyear-tests for the regular English 1-2 students, and as post-tests for the remedial English students; these were administered during the last week of the first semester. Tests 5 and 6 served as post-tests for the regular English students, and were administered during the last week of the second semester. These 6 test essays were written by all students in addition to the themes, described above, assigned in their respective sections.

To make certain that the subjects from the various sections all took these examinations under the same conditions, all subjects were assembled in a single auditorium at a single time for examination purposes. (A few students did take make-up examinations in other places and at other times, but these students were not concentrated in any one of the sections.) The same new, spacious auditorium was used for all six of the examinations, which were administered from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday (tests 1,3,5) and Thursday (tests 2,4,6) evenings.

The first two parts of each test were designed to help a student "warm up" for the third, which called on him to produce an expository essay. Only the essay itself was evaluated for the purposes of the experiment.

It is worth noting here that the practice of appending "helpful" questions to the writing assignments in Part III of each examination proved to be of questionable utility. Indeed, the readers who subsequently evaluated the organization of the student essays believed that the inclusion of such questions made their task of evaluation more difficult than it would otherwise have been.

The six tests were selected and adapted from a number which had been used successfully in earlier years for the purpose of selecting incoming students (who had met other requirements, as well) for advanced placement in the university's freshman composition course. The tests were arranged into three sets (1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6) with the intention of making each set the equivalent of the other two in estimated difficulty of reading matter (Part I) and writing assignment (Part III), but in such a way that each constituent examination of a single set was different from the other in regard to the assigned topic for writing.

The steps taken, then, to minimize what is sometimes called "test error"[17] included:

1) having all subjects write the same tests,

2) giving each subject two opportunities (with two different assigned topics) to provide a representative sample of his writing at each testing point in the study,

3) matching the sets of tests used as pre-, post-, and midyear-tests in regard to estimated difficulty, and

4) standardizing the mode of discourse, time allotted for writing, and examining conditions for all tests.

D. Grading

1. Objective Tests

Objective tests were machine-graded, and the scores punched on cards for statistical analysis by computer.

2. Test Essays

a. Procedures

All test essays were evaluated by a team of ten readers during a two-week grading period at the end of the academic year 1964-1965. The usual schedule was for all readers to convene at 9:00 a.m. in a university seminar room, where each graded at his own speed until 10:30, when a 15-20 minute break was called. The second morning session extended from approximately 10:45 to 12:15, when the group disbanded for lunch. On most afternoons, a single 2-hour afternoon session ended the day, but on two occasions the afternoon was divided into two sessions of 1 1/2 hours each.

At the start of each day, each reader was given a set of 6 -10 essays, a copy of the appropriate examination (with its identifying number obliterated), and a pile of forms on which to record grades (one grade per form). No marks were made on the test essays themselves. Whenever a reader finished one set, he was given

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[17] i.e., errors in measurement due to inadequate controls or improper procedures in testing. See John W. French, "Schools of Thought in Judging Excellence of English Themes" (ETS reprint, 1962), p. 4 and the more thorough treatment of "the assignment variable" in Braddock et al. pp. 7 - 10.

another, and the essays making up the first set were shuffled into a new order before they were passed on to another reader. Every section of students (both regular and remedial) participating in the study at the time an examination was given was represented in every set of essays from that examination.

The essays were written in bluebooks, each of which bore only a five-digit identification code. One of the five digits was a dummy number, inserted to keep the readers from associating any series of numbers with any test (pre-, post-, or mid-year) or any section. A check at the end of the two-week grading period confirmed the success of this system in maintaining the anonymity of students, sections, and test numbers thoughout the grading period.

As a matter of fact, both pre- and post-tests were graded both early and late in the grading period, while midyear tests were graded at the beginning and near the middle of the period.

b. Criteria

Each of the test essays was given a separate grade on each of five elements.

1) CONTENT -- i.e., significance and adequacy of support given the central idea

2) ORGANIZATION -- of the paper as a whole

3) REASONING -- i.e., logical development of separate ideas

4) STYLE -- including sentence structure, diction, figurative language and tone

5) GRAMMAR and MECHANICS.

Any grade from A+ through F- could be assigned to each of these elements. Earlier studies had limited readers to five possible grades, corresponding roughly to the usual A, B, C, D, and F grades, but the investigators in this study believed that experienced teachers of English (from which group the readers were recruited) were capable of making finer distinctions than that in their evaluations of student writing. (Indeed, the teachers recruited were all accustomed to using pluses and minuses in their evaluations of student writing.) Accordingly, the investigators established a fifteen-point scale for evaluations, A+ (15) through F- (1). The entire scale is reproduced, below, as Appendix D.

Obviously, a fifteen-point scale can be no more valuable than a five-point (or a fifty-point) scale if various readers apply it according to various standards.[18] Accordingly, a single standard was established: that of the Chief Reader in the study. This was a person with over twenty years of experience in teaching freshman and advanced composition courses and with several years of experience and training in related activities (on the staff of a commercial publisher and as a grader of College Board English examinations). Steps taken to insure that all readers were applying that same standard began with the process of selecting readers for participation in the study.

c. Selection of Readers

The ten readers in the study were selected from a panel of applicants who participated in a series of practice grading sessions during the second semester. Grades assigned during these sessions to a set of sample test essays were analyzed to determine which applicants held standards most like the Chief Reader's; these would be considered the likeliest prospects for further training. The ten whose average grades were closest to the Chief Reader's and whose grades correlated most highly (and positively) with those of the Chief Reader were selected for participation in the study. Six of these had submitted grades which showed correlation coefficients of +.7 or better for one or more of the elements being evaluated. The grades in REASONING submitted by one of the applicants who was not selected showed the highest negative correlation encountered: -.8 .

d. Checks during Grading Sessions

The first morning of the two-week grading period was devoted exclusively to training and practice grading. Thereafter, the first item of business each morning was the grading of a sample essay which had been Xerographically reproduced to permit all graders to evaluate it at the same time. The grades assigned were then reviewed and discussed. Following the review, individual conferences were held outside the grading room with any readers whose grades were more than two points (i.e., two-thirds of a letter grade) away from the Chief Reader's. This whole procedure was repeated at least once, and usually twice, later in the day.

As an additional check, the Chief Reader periodically pulled one test essay out of a set and graded it "across the board," assigning a grade for each of the five elements being evaluated. As each reader finished the set to which that essay belonged, his grades were compared to those of the Chief Reader. Again, a difference of more

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[18] Braddock et al. have recorded some disagreement with this view (p. 12, f. n.) but certainly most researchers today would accept it, especially in regard to studies like this one, in which the grades assigned by different readers to a single essay were not combined into a "total mark."

than two points called for a conference.

If the nature and frequency of the checks suggests that the atmosphere in the grading room was tense or that the readers were antagonistic, that suggestion is very far from the truth. All had agreed to grade by a single standard, and all were willing, even eager, to do whatever was necessary to keep to that standard. The atmosphere of the grading room was as friendly and relaxed as it was busy and professional.

e. Division of Labor

Originally, it was planned to have two different readers grade each test essay "across the board," and then call in a third reader if the two judgments were not substantially the same. During the first few grading sessions it became clear that this system would not provide the hoped for level of reliability in grading. Some readers had no trouble perceiving and using the single standard when assigning grades for CONTENT, but had difficulty correlating their grades with the Chief Reader's when grading for STYLE; other readers were not troubled by STYLE but by REASONING, and so on.

On the morning of the third day of the grading period, three persons arrived with suggestions for improving the procedure. The Chief Investigator, the Chief Reader, and a member of the reading team, operating independently, had all come up with the very same proposal: let each member of the team specialize by grading only one or two of the elements in each essay. When put to the test, the proposal demonstrated its merit, and reliability improved hearteningly. From that point on, each essay was read four or five times by four or five different readers, but only one or two elements were graded at each reading.

Because time did not permit re-grading all of the essays which had been graded under the old system, the investigators were forced to depend upon Tests 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 as sources of data for analysis. These included both of the pre-tests and both of the post-tests, but only one midyear-test. Since the midyear-tests were to have served as post-tests for the remedial English 1 sections, data from these sections and data from regular English 1-2 sections were analyzed in two different ways.

E. Data Analysis

1. Regular English Sections

There seemed to be no point in averaging or totaling the grades assigned the various elements of a single essay; such a procedure simply obscures differences between one essay and another. Similarly, there seemed to be no point in averaging or totaling the grades assigned to the two pre-, or two post-tests. If a student, while writing on a given Tuesday organizes his material better than while writing on the following Thursday, is this to be taken as an indication that his writing proficiency has suffered during the intervening forty-eight hours, or that his real ability to organize

lies somewhere between the two levels manifested in the two papers? Probably not. Acting on the premise that students very frequently write less well than they know how to write, but very seldom better than they know how to write, the investigators compiled the higher of the two grades achieved by each student on each element in the two pre-tests, and compared them to the higher of the two grades achieved on each element in the two post-tests.

2. Remedial English Sections

Since only one of the tests meant to serve as post-tests for the remedial sections provided reliable data, the procedure followed for the regular English sections could not be followed here. Instead, the scores achieved in Test 1 were compared to the scores achieved in Test 3. These two tests were similar in estimated degree of difficulty, both in regard to reading matter and writing assignment.

V. Results

A. Reliability of Test Essay Evaluations

The reliability of the test essay evaluations was determined by computing the correlations between (1) the scores assigned by the readers to a number of test essays and (2) the scores assigned those same essays by the Chief Reader, whose grading standard had been established as the single standard which all readers would employ. The essays used for this purpose included both the sample essays and "across-the-board" essays described in section IV.D.2.d., above. Every grading session held on every day of the grading period is represented by one or more essays in this sample. Table 3 indicates both correlation coefficients and average grades assigned for each of the five elements evaluated. The letter equivalents of the numerical grades can be found in Appendix D.

The correlations found under CONTENT, STYLE, and GRAMMAR & MECHANICS seem impressively high when one considers that any one of fifteen grades could have been assigned to any element of any essay. For purposes of comparison, let it be noted that the reliability of the ETS "English Expression" objective test used in the study, as measured by the correlation between sample grades achieved by subjects who took parallel forms of the same test, is .81 .

The low correlations found under ORGANIZATION and REASONING are easily explained, for both are the result of one reader's grading. (He did not grade for any other elements during the grading period.) At a practice grading session conducted during the second semester, this reader's grades for ORGANIZATION and REASONING showed a +.7 correlation with the grades assigned by the Chief Reader to the same essays, but during the grading period conducted at year's end, his grades made necessary more conferences than any other reader's. Included in section VI, below, is a recommendation which could help in avoiding similar developments in future studies.

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SCORES ASSIGNED BY
(1) READERS AND (2) CHIEF READER

	CONTENT	ORG.	REAS.	STYLE	GR. & MECH.
Correlations	.51	.04	.21	.67	.73
Average Grade Readers	6.9	7.8	7.6	8.3	9.7
Average Grade Chief Reader	6.3	7.5	6.3	8.2	9.1
N=pairs of grades*	44	49	56	43	59

*These differ from element to element because more than one reader might have been grading for a single element at the time a sample was graded, thus providing more than one pair of grades for correlation.

Though their low reliability makes it necessary to view the ORGANIZATION and REASONING grades with skepticism, it should be noted that they did distinguish between the performances of regular and remedial English students (cf. Tables 5 and 6 with Tables 15 and 16, below). This was true even though the readers could not tell which essays had been submitted by remedial and which by regular English students (see sect. IV.D.2.a., above).

B. Regular English Sections

1. Analysis of Test Essay Scores

a. Cell Means

Tables 4 through 8, below, are based on the higher of the two pre-test scores and the higher of the two post-test scores achieved by each regular English student in each of the elements of writing proficiency measured. The letter equivalents of the numerical scores can be found in Appendix D.

TABLE 4

CELL MEANS, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "CONTENT"

		Low Freq.	Control	High Freq.	
Instructor A	Cell #	1	2	3	TOT Cells:
	Students	22	21	20	1,2,3
	Pre-tests	7.82	8.38	8.55	Diff.:
	Post "	7.41	7.86	7.45	- .66
	Diff.	-.41	-.52	-1.10	
Instructor B	Cell #	4	5	6	TOT Cells:
	Students	19	18	18	4,5,6
	Pre-tests	7.47	7.72	8.11	Diff.:
	Post "	7.47	6.83	8.11	- .29
	Diff.	0	-.89	0	
	TOT Cells:	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6	
	Diff.:	-.22	-.69	-.58	

TABLE 5

CELL MEANS, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "ORGANIZATION"

		Low Freq.	Control	High Freq.	
Instructor A	Cell #	1	2	3	TOT Cells:
	Students	22	21	20	1,2,3
	Pre-tests	8.73	8.86	9.00	Diff.:
	Post "	8.73	9.67	9.65	+ .48
	Diff.	0	+.81	+.65	
Instructor B	Cell #	4	5	6	TOT Cells:
	Students	19	18	18	4,5,6
	Pre-tests	8.90	8.61	9.11	Diff.:
	Post "	8.37	8.66	9.56	- .02
	Diff.	-.53	+.05	+.45	
	TOT Cells:	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6	
	Diff.:	-.25	+.46	+.56	

TABLE 6

CELL MEANS, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "REASONING"

		Low Freq.	Control	High Freq.	
Instructor A	Cell #	1	2	3	TOT Cells: 1,2,3
	Students	22	21	20	
	Pre-tests	8.86	8.24	8.30	
	Post "	8.91	9.00	9.15	
	Diff.	+.05	+.76	+.85	Diff.: + .54
Instructor B	Cell #	4	5	6	TOT Cells: 4,5,6
	Students	19	18	18	
	Pre-tests	9.11	8.11	8.61	
	Post "	9.05	8.83	8.67	
	Diff.	-.06	+.72	+.06	Diff.: + .23
	TOT Cells:	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6	
	Diff.:	0	+.74	+.48	

TABLE 7

CELL MEANS, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "STYLE"

		Low Freq.	Control	High Freq.	
Instructor A	Cell #	1	2	3	TOT Cells: 1,2,3
	Students	22	21	20	
	Pre-tests	8.55	8.10	7.80	
	Post "	7.90	8.14	7.95	
	Diff.	-.65	+.04	+.15	Diff.: -. 16
Instructor B	Cell #	4	5	6	TOT Cells: 4,5.6
	Students	19	18	18	
	Pre-tests	8.00	7.83	8.00	
	Post "	7.53	7.28	8.11	
	Diff.	-.47	-.55	+.11	Diff.: - .31
	TOT Cells:	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6	
	Diff.:	-.57	-.23	+.13	

TABLE 8

CELL MEANS, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "GRAMMAR & MECHANICS"

		Low Freq.	Control	High Freq.	
Instructor A	Cell #	1	2	3	TOT Cells: 1,2,3
	Students	22	21	20	
	Pre-tests	10.05	10.48	10.30	
	Post "	10.23	11.05	9.80	
	Diff.	+.18	+.57	-.50	Diff.: + .09
Instructor B	Cell #	4	5	6	TOT Cells: 4,5,6
	Students	19	18	18	
	Pre-tests	10.53	8.56	10.67	
	Post "	11.05	9.94	11.11	
	Diff.	+.52	+1.38	+.44	Diff.: + .78
	TOT Cells:	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6	
	Diff.:	+.34	+.94	-.05	

b. Analyses of Variance

Tables 9 through 13 are based on the same student scores as Tables 4 through 8, above. Because of the differences in the numbers of students per section (caused by drop-outs during the year), the "method of unweighted means" was used in computing these analyses of variance.

TABLE 9

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS,
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST
SCORES IN "CONTENT"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.22	.22	.56
Writing Frequencies	2	.26	.13	.34
Interaction (I x WF)	2	.54	.27	.69
Error (adjusted)	112	43.68	.39	

TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "ORGANIZATION"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.37	.37	1.00
Writing Frequencies	2	.77	.38	1.04
Interaction (I x WF)	2	.08	.04	.10
Error (adjusted)	112	41.31	.37	

TABLE 11

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "REASONING"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.15	.15	.30
Writing Frequencies	2	.57	.28	.58
Interaction (I x WF)	2	.18	.09	.18
Error (adjusted)	112	55.06	.49	

TABLE 12

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "STYLE"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.04	.04	.13
Writing Frequencies	2	.47	.24	.83
Interaction (I x WF)	2	.16	.08	.28
Error (adjusted)	112	31.89	.28	

TABLE 13

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REGULAR ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "GRAMMAR & MECHANICS"

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.74	.74	2.17
Writing Frequencies	2	1.04	.52	1.52
Interaction (I x WF)	2	.10	.05	.15
Error (adjusted)	112	38.19	.34	

c. Discussion

Tables 4 through 8 indicate that there were some slight differences between sections in the degrees of improvement, or deterioration, of test essay scores in the Regular English portion of the study. However, Tables 9 through 13 disclose that the differences between sections were not statistically significant. In short, these test essay scores do not support the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman English course.

2. Observations of Instructors, Assistants, and Students

If proponents of the theory that practice makes perfect can find no support in the above analysis of test essay scores, neither can their detractors take any comfort from the personal observations of the study's participants. Students and staff alike believed that writing frequency made a difference.

a. Student Opinions

At the end of the first semester, the majority of the students in the high-frequency regular English sections believed that they were amply repaid for the time and effort which went into the writing of twenty themes by improvements in their writing proficiency and facility. Only one-sixth of the high-frequency students believed that too much writing had been called for. The following comments are representative of those included in an anonymous set of course evaluations:

> "Although some complain about the frequency of writing in this class compared to other classes, the practice has proved much more valuable than the effort required to maintain this frequency."

"Even though I may have complained about the number of themes and the time consumed in completing them, I can still say that the course was totally profitable to a college freshman like myself."

"[After several weeks of practice] words and ideas were coming to me much easier ... and I could sit down and write a paper in only half the time that it took me a month before."

"I feel that a main reason for the increased ease with which I am able to write stems from the more than average amount of themes that we have written this semester."

"In my estimation, the more one writes the better his writing becomes."

"The only way a student will improve his writing is by writing, writing, and more writing."

At the end of the academic year, when the high-frequency regular English students had written thirty-nine themes, approximately one-third of them were still convinced that writing a large number of themes had paid appropriate devidends. Another third were noncommittal, while the rest expressed the belief that too much writing had been assigned. Also,slightly over one-third of the students in these sections felt that most of the improvement they had seen in their writing had shown itself by the end of the first semester, and recommended that the course be made a one-semester course.

At the same time, many of the regular English students in the low-frequency sections believed that they had been given too little opportunity to practice writing. Approximately one-third of the students in these sections called for more writing in the course, and not only because they felt a course grade based on more samples would be fairer; several of them stated explicitly the belief that with more practice they would have learned to write better.

b. Staff Opinions

The instructors of the regular English sections and their assistants all believed that the high-frequency students had improved more than the others in regard to both writing proficiency and writing facility. One of the instructors wrote:

"I was conscious of marked improvement in the High-Frequency section in the following areas not measured by the test essay grading: focus, clarity, control of emphasis. Most of the students showed some improvement in selection of relevant detail for illustrative or persuasive purposes--students in the High-Frequency section showed more improvement in this respect.... The visible improvement in <u>facility</u> in the High-Frequency section might well prove a gain for the group of particular practical value."

c. Discussion

Participants in the study offered several possible explanations to account for the difference between the evidence of test essay scores and the evidence of personal observations. Any or all of the following could conceivably account for the disparity:

1. The differences in degrees of improvement observed by the staff from section to section lay in areas not measured by the test essay grading. (See sec. V.B.2.b., above.)

2. The staff was able to observe many samples of each student's writing throughout the year; the test essays constituted a much smaller set of samples. (This would be less true in regard to students in the low-frequency sections than in regard to students in the high-frequency or control sections.)

3. A few extraordinary or egregious writers affect an instructor's general impressions of a section out of all proportion to their significance, in that section.

4. Student and staff evaluations of student writing are affected by so many personal variables that they are untrustworthy.

5. Any system of evaluation which does not take into consideration personal variables and the total act of communication, which involves a particular writer communicating a particular matter to a particular audience, is untrustworthy.

Nothing in this study encourages or even permits an impartial observer to assess the relevance of the respective explanations offered above. Nevertheless, none may be ignored by designers of future studies concerned with the measurement of writing proficiency.

C. Remedial English Sections

1. Analysis of Test Essay Scores

a. Cell Means

Tables 14 through 18, below, are based on the socres achieved by each remedial English student in Test Essays 1 and 3. Letter equivalents of the numerical scores can be found in Appendix D.

TABLE 14

CELL MEANS, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "CONTENT"

		Control	High Frequency	
Instructor C	Cell #	7	8	TOT Cells: 7 & 8
	Students	14	16	
	Pre-test	4.92	5.75	
	Post "	6.14	6.63	Diff.: + 1.04
	Diff.	+1.22	+.88	
Instructor D	Cell #	9	10	TOT Cells: 9 & 10
	Students	17	17	
	Pre-test	5.06	5.94	
	Post "	5.29	5.52	Diff.: - .10
	Diff.	+.23	-.42	
	TOT Cells:	7 & 9	8 & 10	
	Diff.:	+.68	+.21	

TABLE 15

CELL MEANS, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "ORGANIZATION"

		Control	High Frequency	
Instructor C	Cell #	7	8	TOT Cells: 7 & 8
	Students	14	16	
	Pre-test	5.64	6.13	
	Post "	6.21	6.94	Diff.: + .70
	Diff.	+.57	+.81	
Instructor D	Cell #	9	10	TOT Cells: 9 & 10
	Students	17	17	
	Pre-test	5.71	4.88	
	Post "	4.71	5.71	Diff.: - .09
	Diff.	-1.00	+.83	
	TOT Cells:	7 & 9	8 & 10	
	Diff.	-.29	+.82	

TABLE 16

CELL MEANS, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "REASONING"

		Control	High Frequency	
Instructor C	Cell #	7	8	TOT Cells: 7 & 8
	Students	14	16	
	Pre-test	4.86	5.31	
	Post "	6.71	7.13	Diff.: + 1.83
	Diff.	+1.85	+1.82	
Instructor D	Cell #	9	10	TOT Cells: 9 & 10
	Students	17	17	
	Pre-test	4.41	4.88	
	Post "	5.82	5.47	Diff.: + 1.00
	Diff.	+1.41	+.59	
	TOT Cells:	7 & 9	8 & 10	
	Diff.:	+1.61	+1.19	

TABLE 17

CELL MEANS, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "STYLE"

		Control	High Frequency	
Instructor C	Cell #	7	8	TOT Cells: 7 & 8
	Students	14	16	
	Pre-test	5.57	6.13	
	Post "	5.86	5.63	Diff.: - .13
	Diff.	+.29	-.50	
Instructor D	Cell #	9	10	TOT Cells: 9 & 10
	Students	17	17	
	Pre-test	5.88	5.29	
	Post "	5.53	5.94	Diff.: + .15
	Diff.	-.35	+.65	
	TOT Cells:	7 & 9	8 & 10	
	Diff.	-.06	+.09	

TABLE 18

CELL MEANS, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
SCORES IN "GRAMMAR & MECHANICS"

		Control	High Frequency	
Instructor C	Cell #	7	8	TOT Cells:
	Students	14	16	7 & 8
	Pre-test	6.50	7.13	Diff.:
	Post "	7.79	7.38	+ .74
	Diff.	+1.29	+.25	
Instructor D	Cell #	9	10	TOT Cells:
	Students	17	17	9 & 10
	Pre-test	5.71	5.77	Diff.:
	Post "	6.77	7.35	+ 1.32
	Diff.	+ 1.06	+1.58	
	TOT Cells:	7 & 9	8 & 10	
	Diff.:	+1.16	+.94	

b. Analyses of Variance

Tables 19 through 23 are based on the same student scores as Tables 14 through 18, above. Because of the differences in the numbers of students per section (caused by drop-outs during the semester), the "method of unweighted means" was used in computing these analyses of variance.

TABLE 19

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS,
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST
SCORES IN "CONTENT"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	1.28	1.28	2.73
Writing Frequencies	1	.24	.24	.52
Interaction (I x WF)	1	.02	.02	.04
Error (adjusted)	68	28.60	.47	

TABLE 20

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "ORGANIZATION"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.61	.61	.82
Writing Frequencies	1	1.07	1.07	1.44
Interaction (I x WF)	1	.63	.63	.84
Error (adjusted)	60	44.55	.74	

TABLE 21

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "REASONING"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.70	.70	.85
Writing Frequencies	1	.19	.19	.23
Interaction (I x WF)	1	.15	.15	.19
Error (adjusted)	60	48.96	.82	

TABLE 22

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "STYLE"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.06	.06	.10
Writing Frequencies	1	.01	.01	.02
Interaction (I x WF)	1	.80	.80	1.27
Error (adujsted)	60	37.78	.63	

TABLE 23

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, REMEDIAL ENGLISH SECTIONS, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES IN "GRAMMAR & MECHANICS"

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Instructors	1	.31	.31	.46
Writing Frequencies	1	.06	.06	.09
Interaction (I x WF)	1	.61	.61	.90
Error (adjusted)	60	40.69	.68	

c. Discussion

As in the cases of the regular English sections, there were some slight differences between remedial English sections in the degrees of improvement or deterioration of test essay scores (see Tables 14 through 18). Once again, these differences between sections were not statistically significant (Tables 19 through 23). The only F ratio which approached significance was the one indicating the relative effects of instructors on "CONTENT" scores, and even here the figure would be significant only at the 10 percent level (i.e., the probability would be less than one in 10 that the observed differences were the products of chance). Once again, then, an analysis of test essay scores has failed to support the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman English course.

2. Observations of Instructors, Assistants, and Students

Again as in the Regular English portion of the study, Remedial English students and staff observed an effect of writing frequency which the test essay scores did not disclose. Attempts by participants to account for the disparity between the evidence of test essay scores and the evidence of personal observations are summarized in sec. V.B.2.c., above. Summaries of the observations made by remedial English students and staff are included in Appendix B.

D. The Secondary Objective of the Study

The secondary objective of this study was the testing of the hypothesis that there is a high correlation between a student's knowledge of English grammar and mechanics, as demonstrated in an objective test, and his ability to write well, as demonstrated in his expository prose.

Table 24 reports the correlations found between student scores in the "English Expression" objective test (in the Educational Testing Service's Cooperative English Tests, Form 1C) administered during the summer preceding the start of the study, and the

pre-test essay scores achieved by students in each of the elements of writing proficiency measured. For purposes of comparison, Table 25 reports the correlations between the "English Expression" test scores and student scores in two other objective tests, as well as the correlation between scores in the "English Expression" test and in the CQT VERBAL Test as reported by the CQT test technical manual. (This last figure is, of course, based on the test scores of students not in the present study.)

The statistical significance of the correlations reported in Table 24 and a comparison of the figures in Tables 24 and 25 justify the conclusion that these results support the secondary hypothesis of this study.

TABLE 24

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN "ENGLISH EXPRESSION" OBJECTIVE TEST SCORES AND ESSAY TEST SCORES

N = 179 Students

	Essay Test Scores				
	CONTENT	ORG.	REAS.	STYLE	GR. & MECH.
"ENGLISH EXPRESSION" SCORES: Correlations:	.44 *	.46 *	.47 *	.47 *	.62 *

* Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 25

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN "ENGLISH EXPRESSION" OBJECTIVE TEST SCORES AND OTHER OBJECTIVE TEST SCORES

	"READING COMPREHENSION"	SAT VERBAL	CQT VERBAL
"ENGLISH EXPRESSION" SCORES; Correlations:	.60 *	.59 *	.53 *
No. Students:	179	179	214 **

* Significant at the .001 level
** Not students in this study

VI. Conclusions and Implications

A. Conclusions

1. A statistical analysis of the test essay scores in this study does not support the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman English course.

2. The personal observations of instructors, assistants, and students in this study support the hypothesis that writing proficiency improves as writing frequency increases in a college freshman English course.

3. Participants offered several possible explanations to account for the difference between the evidence of test essay scores and the evidence of personal observations, but nothing in this study would encourage or even permit an impartial observer to assess the relevance of the respective explanations offered. (See V.B.2.c., above.)

4. The results of this study support the hypothesis that there is a high correlation between a student's knowledge of English grammar and mechanics, as demonstrated in an objective test, and his ability to write well, as demonstrated in his expository prose.

B. Implications

1. Writing Frequency

Though this study's test results neither proved nor disproved the theory that writing practice improves writing proficiency, the comments of participating students and staff point to the desirability of assigning weekly themes during the first semester, and fewer themes during the second semester, in freshman English courses which enroll students similar to those who participated in the study.

2. Evaluations of Student Writing

a. Several of the evaluation procedures adopted for this study might well prove useful in future studies of writing proficiency. Among these are:

1) The acceptance of a single reader's standards by all other readers engaged in the evaluation of student essays.

2) The use of a fifteen-point grading scale, in applying those standards.

3) The specialization of readers--some rating one element, some another, in the essays being evaluated.

b. Some procedures which were not employed in this study but which deserve consideration for future studies include:

1) The selection of one or more "supernumerary" readers, so that if the grading of one or more regular readers proves unreliable during the grading period, substitutes are available.

2) The making of provisions for measuring writing "facility" as well as writing proficiency.

3) The establishment of procedures for collecting relevant staff and student comments more frequently and systematically than they were collected in this study. Formal questionnaires might well be used for this purpose.

3. Need for Further Research

This report must end as it began -- with the assertion that we will be in a better position to reform the traditional college freshman English course when we have more data on how much of what kind of practice is how helpful, and when. Studies such as this one need replication and refinement, and other studies dealing with other considerations in the teaching of composition need replication and refinement, if the knowledge requisite to useful reform is to be discovered and applied.

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APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS (1964 - 1965)
FRESHMAN ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

PURPOSES English 1-2 is a two-semester course designed to help the student improve his writing of exposition and argument. To this end he will be expected to master principles of logic and rhetoric in conjunction both with his own writing and with his reading and analysis of a number of essays, short stories, and poems. Emphasis in the course will be on clear thinking, effective organization, and some mastery of the wide resources of the language. The student will be expected to write clear, coherent, and fluent prose on the level of formal usage.

The Department of English is aware that writing is a complex art. The following syllabus focuses on those describable features of logic and rhetoric which, if mastered as means, can lead to effective communication. Regarded as useful means, the conventions appear in a truer perspective than if regarded as ends in themselves. The goal is improved writing.

FIRST SEMESTER

I. Introduction: purposes, standards, procedures

II. Unity and emphasis of purpose. Thesis. Levels of usage.

III. Arrangement of material in paragraphs and whole works
- A. Topic and sentence outlining
- B. Principles of arrangement
  1. Chronological
  2. Deductive
  3. Inductive
  4. Enumerative
  5. Climactic

IV. Methods of development of material
- A. Definition
- B. Illustration and example
- C. Division and classification
- D. Comparison, analogy, contrast
- E. Cause and effect
- F. Negation
- G. Restatement

V. Logical fallacies
   A. Rationalization and false assumption
   B. Sweeping and false generalizations
   C. Faulty deductive logic (e.g., syllogism of the reversed middle, post hoc, ergo propter hoc, false analogy)
   D. Misuse of language and emotive appeal (e.g., begging the question, argument ad hominem)

VI. Argument by appeal to reason
   A. Formulating the proposition
   B. Discriminating the issues
   C. Considering the reader

VII. Review

SECOND SEMESTER

I. Introduction

II. Research *
   A. Note taking
   B. Resources of the library

III. Documentation *
   A. Use of quotations
   B. Paraphrase and precis
   C. Citation of fact and opinion
   D. Mechanics (footnotes, bibliographies)
   E. Avoidance of plagiarism

IV. Style
   A. Individual voice

   B. Diction
      1. Usage and the dictionary
      2. Precision; the specific, the concrete, the gernal, the abstract
      3. Connotation and denotation
      4. Freshness
      5. Economy

   C. Sentence structure
      1. Logical gradation
      2. Terseness, vigor, use of active voice

*To avoid an excessive burden upon library facilities, the Director of Freshman Composition may indicate to individual instructors the portion of the semester in which these topics are to be covered.

APPENDIX A

3. Parallelism and subordination
4. Variety of structure and length

D. Figurative language

E. Tone

V. Review

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

SPECIAL REPORT ON THE FOUR REMEDIAL SECTIONS OF ENGLISH I WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE WRITING FREQUENCY EXPERIMENT, FIRST SEMESTER, 1964 - 1965

In September of 1964 ten sections of Remedial English, a freshman course in expository writing, were set up by the Counseling and Guidance Office at the University of Massachusetts. The enrollment in these sections was approximately 220. Four of these sections, with a total enrollment of about eighty students, were selected for participation in the Writing Frequency Experiment.

The students in the remedial program are assigned to sections for additional assistance in written English based on the student's score in the "English Expression" section of the ETS Cooperative English Tests, Form 1 C, administered by the Guidance Office. In order to give these students more help and discipline in their writing, the English Department then requires the student to attend class one hour per week in addition to his regularly scheduled classes. The additional hour is conducted by undergraduate English majors, carefully selected, who are prospective graduate students or prospective teachers of English at the high school level. The freshmen in these special sections are given an opportunity in the extra required hour to work on their own writing problems under supervision.

Since the writing problems of the poorly-prepared student are many and variable, an attempt is made to help the student discover and work in his own area of weakness. Regardless, however, of these many areas, the student has an opportunity to write more, to analyze for himself his own style and mechanics. With assistance he learns how to explain his own sentence composition and subsequently to see how his sentences fit into his construction of unified, well-developed paragraphs. He learns to look for his own mechanical errors and makes himself aware of his carelessness.

The two instructors who conducted the four sections in the program both made interesting observations about the composition of the two sections under their supervision. Instructor I reported that Section B5, which was a high frequency of writing group, was in the final analysis a better group than Section A9, a control group. The instructor wrote: "Not only do I think the extra writing helped them but also I found that they seemed to enjoy it a little more than the regular [the other] section. They did not have the dread of a class paragraph that the regular group had. On the whole I thought it was a worthwhile experiment which in terms of the increased amount of writing could be very valuably added to all English I and II classes."

Instructor II made the observation that Section A7, which was a high frequency group, made more progress than Section B4, the section having the assigned eight themes written outside of class. Students in section A7 became not only more responsive in class discussion of essays and short stories, but also more eager to express themselves in written comments on the material. These students at the beginning of the semester were poorer in writing and in grammar than the students in section B4. The additional writing definitely helped to develop their confidence in communicating.

In the conduct of the remedial sections in the Writing Frequency Project, two sections were assigned eight themes, the number required by the department, varying in length from 300-400 to 500-700 words. The students in these sections then had additional writing of short paragraphs and examination of writing errors in their extra "help" period of one hour per week. However, the other two sections in the remedial program were assigned over twenty themes of which half were 500-700 words and the other half 300-500 words. In addition these same students also wrote frequent short class paragraphs, or sometimes summarizing paragraphs, based on the content of material assigned or discussed in class. These students also had the advantage of the extra "help" period. The written work of the students in the regular sections and the high frequency writing sections was all carefully examined, commented on, more than half the papers being read by two readers. The student in these sections soon became aware of the scrutiny which was being given to his papers with the result that he, too, became more analytical of his own writing.

The observations of two instructors, the graduate assistant who worked meticulously on the papers, and the four undergraduate student-assistants were many and varied. All commented with the program agreed that the more writing the student did and the more assistance he had in examining his writing, the more he improved, not only in his ability to construct better sentences but also in his attitude towards his own communication. The first area in which this improvement showed was in the recognition of mechanical errors, misspelling, poorly-constructed sentences, and mistakes in punctuation. By frequent writing of even the 150-200 word paragraph the student soon found that he could have something to say, and once having formulated his ideas, he could then examine how he expressed them and how he projected them to a reader. He also found that the more he wrote the more fluent his ideas were. His attitude changed, in many instances, particularly with the student lacking verbal facility. The student discovered that through more practice he was able to write more sentences composing longer paragraphs. By writing frequent class paragraphs, he learned he could control his ideas. He learned to use transition which helped to make his paragraphs coherent. He began to be his own disciplinarian and his own copyeditor. When he could see his mistakes and make revisions, then he gained more confidence. By the examination of his own short paragraphs, he learned that the "long" paper was not difficult to compose. He began to see then an outline of sentences, a form, helped him in his organization.

The students themselves made many interesting comments on their "growth" in writing. A survey revealed overwhelmingly that the students felt that the more they wrote, the better their writing was.

None of the students in these four experimental sections received a course grade higher than a C. Of the approximately eighty students in the program, about fifteen dropped the course or withdrew from the University. Of the students who finished the course twenty-four received a grade of C, thirty-four received a grade of D (many of these D's) and four received an F with the recommendation that if they were to continue their courses at the University they should repeat English I.

/s/ Martha R. Wright, Supervisor
English I Remedial

July 12, 1965

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

TEST ESSAY EXAMINATIONS

Project English Study, 1964-1965
TEST ESSAY #1

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination before beginning to write. Then read the passage marked "Part I" carefully again. Answer the questions (Part II). Write the essay as directed (Part III). The essay is the most important part of the examination.

Your writing will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, and clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly. Use only one side of the paper. Leave adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy; neat corrections are acceptable.

Part I

We live the time that a match flickers; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word <u>life</u>. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyám to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapor, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honor of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout--that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues; nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the

most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution. -- from Aes Triplex by Robert Louis Stevenson

Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, on this page, the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. What, according to Robert Louis Stevenson, is the best definition of life?

2. How does philosophy define life?

3. What is Stevenson's attitude toward the definition offered by philosophy?

4. What is meant by "we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living"?

5. Which man loves life: the Alpine climber or the man on a diet?

Part III

Write your ID# for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of about 500-600 words analyzing your own love of living. What things do you enjoy most in living? Why do you enjoy these things? Are they materialistic or idealistic?

APPENDIX C

Project English Study, 1964-1965
TEST ESS:E 02

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination once before writing anything. Then read the passage marked "Part I" carefully again, answer the questions (Part II), and write the essay (Part III) as directed.

The essay will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly, using only one side of the paper and leaving adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy. Neat corrections are acceptable.

Part I

The large majority of our fellow-citizens care as much about literature as they care about archaeology or the programme of the legislature. They do not ignore it; they are not quite indifferent to it. But their interest in it is faint and perfunctory; or, if their interest happens to be violent, it is spasmodic. Ask the two hundred thousand persons whose enthusiasm made the vogue of a popular novel ten years ago what they think of that novel now, and you will gather that they have utterly forgotten it, and that they would no more dream of reading it again than of reading Bishop Stubb's Select Charters. Probably if they did read it again they would not enjoy it--not because the said novel is a whit worse now than it was ten years ago; not because their taste has improved--but because they have not had sufficient practice to be able to rely on their taste as a means of permanent pleasure. They simply don't know from one day to the next what will please them.

In the face of this one may ask: Why does the great and universal fame of classical authors continue? The answer is that the fame of classical authors is entirely independent of the majority. Do you suppose that if the fame of Shakespeare depended on the man in the street it would survive a fortnight? The fame of classic authors is originally made, and it is maintained, by a passionate few. Even when a first-class author has enjoyed immense success during his lifetime, the majority have never appreciated him so sincerely as they have appreciated second-rate men. He has always been reinforced by the ardour of the passionate few. And in the case of an author who has emerged into glory after his death the happy sequel has been due solely to the obstinate perserverance of the few. They could not leave him alone; they would not. They kept on savouring him, and talking about him, and buying him, and they generally behaved with such eager zeal, and they were so authoritative and sure of themselves, that at last the majority grew accustomed to the sound of his name and placidly agreed to the proposition that he was genius; the majority really did not care very much either way.

And it is by the passionate few that the renown of genius is kept alive from one generation to another. These few are always at work. They are always rediscovering genius. Their curiosity and enthusiasm are exhaustless, so that there is little chance of genius being ignored. -- from On Literary Taste, Arnold Bennett

APPENDIX C

Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, on this page, each of the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. What in literature pleases the majority of the people?

2. By whom is the fame of classical authors made?

3. Who are the "passionate few"?

4. How do these "passionate few" discover and establish genius?

Part III

Write your ID# for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of about 500-600 words analyzing the kind of literature that pleases you. Why does it give you pleasure? Do you think that it will give you lasting satisfaction?

APPENDIX C

Project English Study, 1964-1965
TEST ESSAY #3

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination before beginning to write. Then read the passage marked "Part I" carefully again. Answer the questions (Part II). Write the essay as directed (Part III). The essay is the most important part of the examination.

Your writing will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, and clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly. Use only one side of the paper. Leave adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy; most corrections are acceptable.

Part I

When a monstrous specter is...man, the disease of agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming;--and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbor, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence, but in all, in their degrees, it is a brave thought:--Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honor sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little:--But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organized injustice, cowardly violence, and treacherous crime; and of the damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labor.

--from Pulvis et Umbra by Robert Louis Stevenson

Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, in the spaces provided on this page, the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. What picture does Robert Louis Stevenson give of man as a physical creature?

2. What is Stevenson's judgment of the spirit of man?

3. What motivates man to be decent, unselfish, brave?

4. What in man most moves Stevenson to admiration?

Part III

Write your ID # for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of about 500-600 words on those qualities in your fellow man which you admire most and those which you admire least. What are your standards of judgment? Where did you get these standards?

APPENDIX C

Project English Study, 1964-1965

TEST ESSAY # 4

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination before beginning to write. Then read the passage marked "Part I" carefully again. Answer the questions (Part II). Write the essay as directed (Part III). The essay is the most important part of the examination.

Your writing will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, and clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly. Use only one side of the paper. Leave adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy; neat corrections are acceptable.

Part I

Rationalization is a form of defense in which a person gives socially acceptable reasons for his behavior. Rationalization is not a process of logical reasoning but an attempt to make conduct appear sensible and in conformity to social expectations; "irrationalization" perhaps would be a more appropriate term. When you rationalize you give "good" reasons that serve to conceal from yourself and from other people the real reasons which are in conflict with learned social standards. Rationalizations may be spoken aloud to other people, expressed in private thoughts to oneself, or shown in non-verbal actions.

A man contemplating the purchase of an automobile that he really cannot afford may persuade himself by a host of good reasons. He points out that the rides in the country will benefit his wife's health; that the recreation afforded by the car will keep him more fit for his job. He may even convince himself that if he does not have the car he is likely to suffer a breakdown and lose his employment entirely. So the man argues that the automobile, far from being an extravagance, will be an economy in the end. Behind such good reasons for buying the car may lie many unacknowledged real reasons. That the car is a badge of success in the community necessary for full social approval, that mastery is involved in the form of outdoing his neighbors, may be strong motives behind his expressed desires.

Rationalization, perhaps more clearly than any other mechanism, illustrates a response to conflicting demands in the culture. Most people in Western culture learn competitive and aggressive patterns of motivation that make them want to succeed and excel, and to secure recognition and approval. At the same time, the training given in the dominant culture teaches children that direct and naive forms of hostility and self-aggrandizement are inferior and punishable. At least, to state openly that one is seeking personal power is not "in good taste." Perhaps the group has to enforce such a rule to keep itself from being dominated too easily by strong persons. People who have learned their lesson well cannot acknowledge their aggressive motivations.

— from Some Varieties of Defense Mechanisms, by Laurance Shaffer and Edward J. Shoben, Jr.

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Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, in the spaces provided on this page, the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. Why do the authors suggest the name "irrationalization" for the process which we call "rationalization"?

2. What is the difference between a "good" reason and a "real" reason, as these authors use the terms?

3. What do the authors consider the "conflicting demands" in our culture?

Part III

Write your ID# for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of about 500-600 words on rationalization as a force in your own thinking. Do you, or your friends, ever rationalize? If so, about what matters (assignments? dates? religion? other matters?) and for what reasons?

APPENDIX C

Project English Study, 1964-1965
TEST ESSAY #3

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination before beginning to write. Then read the passage central Part I carefully again. Answer the questions (Part II). Write the essay as directed (Part III). The essay is the most important part of the examination.

Your writing will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, and clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly. Use only one side of the paper. Leave adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy; neat corrections are acceptable.

Part I

So (man) stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him too, we see double testified the same outline of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant: a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered politics and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of well-doing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the soot margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the God-like law of life. The brown bear, the bison, the barbary, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal: strive like us--like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle--to do evil; like us receive at time unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members* and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some wager with the Grud? Do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trial, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes--God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: surely not all in vain. ... from Pulvis et Umbra by Robert Louis Stevenson

*body

Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, in the spaces provided on this page, each of the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. What traits does man have in common with other life on earth, according to Stevenson?

2. Does Stevenson believe that creatures other than man are troubled by injustices?

3. In what way is man superior to these creatures?

4. What does Stevenson mean by, "God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing"?

Part III

Write your ID# for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of 500-600 words analyzing yourself as a human being motivated by certain ideals. What are these ideals? From where did you get them? How firmly do you uphold them in the face of adversity?

APPENDIX C

Project English Study, 1964-1965
TEST ESSAY #6

You have one hour and fifty minutes for this examination. Read through the entire examination once before writing anything. Then read the passage marked Part I carefully again, answer the questions, (Part II) and write the essay as directed (Part III).

The essay will be judged for straight thinking, sound structure, clear and correct expression. (Be accurate in your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.)

Write legibly, using only one side of the paper and leaving adequate margins. Do not take the time to recopy; neat corrections are acceptable.

Part I

At the beginning a misconception must be removed from the path. Many people, if not most, look on literary taste as an elegant accomplishment, by acquiring which they will complete themselves, and make themselves finally fit as members of a correct society. They are secretly ashamed of their ignorance of literature, in the same way as they would be ashamed of their ignorance of etiquette at a high entertainment, or of their inability to ride a horse if suddenly called upon to do so. There are certain things that a man ought to know, or to know about, and literature is one of them: such is their idea. They have learnt to dress themselves with propriety, and to behave with propriety on all occasions; they are fairly "up" in the questions of the day; by industry and enterprise they are succeeding in their vocations; it behooves them, then, not to forget that an acquaintance with literature is an indispensable part of a self-respecting man's personal baggage. Painting doesn't matter; music doesn't matter very much. But "everyone is supposed to know" about literature. Then, literature is such a charming distraction! Literary taste thus serves two purposes: as a certificate of correct culture and as a private pastime. A young professor of mathematics, immense at mathematics and games, dangerous at chess, capable of Haydn on the violin, once said to me, after listening to some chat on books, "Yes, I must take up literature." As though saying: "I was rather forgetting literature. However, I've polished off all these other things. I'll have a shy[1] at literature now."

This attitude, or any attitude which resembles it, is wrong. To him who really comprehends what literature is, and what the function of literature is, this attitude is simply ludicrous. It is also fatal to the formation of literary taste. People who regard literary taste simply as an accomplishment, and literature simply as a distraction, will never truly succeed either in acquiring the accomplishment or in using it half-acquired as a distraction; though the one is the most perfect of distractions, and though the other is unsurpassed by any other accomplishment in elegance or in power to impress the universal snobbery of civilised mankind. Literature, instead of being an accessory, is the fundamental sine qua non[2] of complete living. -- from On Literary Taste, Arnold Bennett

[1]go [2]necessity

APPENDIX C

Part II

Answer in a sentence or two, in the spaces provided on this page, each of the following questions about the passage you have just read:

1. Does Arnold Bennett agree that there are "certain things a man ought to know, or to know about"?

2. What are the two purposes of literary taste, as many people understand it?

3. Is the young mathematics professor's attitude toward literature characteristic of the attitudes of most people?

4. How important is literature to life, according to Bennett?

Part III

Write your ID# for this test on your bluebook cover. Inside, write an essay of 500-600 words appraising Mr. Bennett's statement of the common attitude toward literature. From your observation of your friends' attitudes toward literature, do you conclude that Mr. Bennett's statement holds true for them? Does it hold true for you? What differences in attitudes, if any, have you observed?

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D

GRADING SCALE

The following scale was used by all essay test readers in applying the standards of the Chief Reader.

A +	=	15
A	=	14
A -	=	13
B	=	12
B	=	11
B -	=	10
C +	=	9
C	=	8
C -	=	7
D +	=	6
D	=	5
D -	=	4
F +	=	3
F	=	2
F -	=	1